

FROM THE TOWER WINDOW

that been the end of Archimago had not Sansloy unlaced his helmet and to his surprise disclosed to Una and himself that here was no good Red Cross Knight, but that hoary-headed miscreant, Archimago, whom he knew right well. Leaving the foul enchanter on the ground, he turned him then to seize fair Una, plucking her full rudely from her ass. Seeing his sovereign dame so roughly handled, that true and loyal servant, her lion, sprang fiercely on Sansloy. Alas! strong as he was, he could not stand against the Paynim's sword. The Saracen with lifted blade pierced through that brave and faithful heart. The lion fell. Then Sansloy seized the helpless maid, and bore her, will or nill, away upon his courser, her prayers availing naught. So was poor Una, of every aid bereft, helpless in the power of that wild, lawless knight.

Naught could she do but scream full piteously. What wit of mortal wight could now devise to save a maid in such a case? But eternal Providence, far passing thought, can make a way where none appears. A wondrous way it wrought to save this lady true.

Far away within the wood a troop of Fauns and Sa'tyrs were



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dancing in a round, while old Syl-va'nus, who was their king, slept in a shady arbor. Gay, rustic, wild-wood folk were these, with horns upon their foreheads and shaggy legs of goats. It chanced that in their sylvan games they heard the maiden's piteous shrieks. In haste they forsook their rural merriment and ran towards the spot whence came that cry. And when the raging Saracen, Sansloy, beheld that rude, misshapen, monstrous rabble rushing toward him, whose like he never saw before, he durst not bide, but got upon his ready steed and flew away.

Then Fauns and Satyrs all stood still, astonished at the beauty and the woful plight of Una, who still afrighted at their appearance, dared neither speak nor move. Perceiving her fear, those rustic folk, moved with pity of her helpless state and wonder at her beauty, gan first to smile in gentleness, and then fell prostrate at her feet. She, guessing thus their friendly, humble hearts, felt reassured and let them lead her thence. Joyous as birds they went, dancing, shouting, singing, strewing her way with green branches and crowning her with garlands.

*And all the way their merry pipes they sound,
That all the woods with doubled echo ring;
And with their hornèd feet do wear the ground,
Leaping like wanton kids in pleasant Spring.
So towards old Syl-va'nus they her bring.*

An old man was Sylvanus, girdled with ivy leaves, and leaning on a cypress staff. When he beheld that lady Una, the flower of faith and beauty, he scarce could think her mortal, but deemed she must be some goddess. Then came the wood-nymphs, too, fair Ham-a-dry'ads, to behold her grace, and from the brooks and streams, the Nai'ads, water nymphs. Henceforth the Satyrs thought none but Una fair, and, wondering at her beauty, ere long they fell upon their knees and worshipped her as Goddess of the Wood. So was fair Una safe among that kindly savage race, yet could she take no joy at finding herself the image of idolatries, but plied her gentle wit to teach those simple creatures

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truth and show them how vain it was to look on her as source of sovereign power divine. Her words were useless. When she did at last restrain their bootless zeal from worshipping her, they only bowed before her ass and made of it a God.

Now while she stayed among these friendly folk, fair Una's wits were ever at work devising how she might escape and once more set forth to seek the Red Cross Knight. It fortune'd at length a noble, warlike knight, Sir Satyrane by name, came to that wood, for he was kin to those strange woodland creatures. Won by her heavenly wisdom and fair beauty, he, on a day when all the Satyrs were gone to do their service to Sylvanus, helped her, once more mounted on her ass, to make her way beyond the forest and to the highway once again. Yet they were but a short way on their journey when once more they came upon Sansloy, and Sir Satyrane at once fell into combat with that Paynim. Full furiously they fought, but when Sansloy perceived the lovely Una whom he late had in his power, he left the conflict to pursue her. Sir Satyrane stayed his flight and drew him once more into conflict, but Una, sore afraid of that unruly Saracen, fled far away.

Meantime the Red Cross Knight fleeing from the Palace of Pride had been once more overtaken by Duessa false, still calling herself Fidessa, faithful and true. She found him dismounted in a green and shady glade beside a bubbling fountain.

*He feeds upon the cooling shade and bayes
His sweaty forehead in the breathing wind,
Which through the trembling leaves full gently plays,
Wherein the cheerful birds of sundry kind,
Do chant sweet music to delight his mind,
The witch approaching gan him fairly greet,
And with reproach of carelessness unkind,
Upbraid, for leaving her in place unmeet,
With foul words tempering fair, sour gall with honey sweet.*

And so once more deluded and deceived, that foolish Red Cross Knight did take her as his lady true. Together they

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lingered in that pleasant spot and dallied slothfully. But alas! as false Duessa knew full well, the fountain by which they sat, that tempted them thus to slothful dalliance, was enchanted with a spell, so that whoever drank thereof lost all his strength and manly force. And yet she never stayed the Knight with telling what she knew when he lay down upon the brink and drank of that clear, crystal stream.

Eftsoons his manly force began to fail and he grew weak as water. Yet still he gave no hint of what he felt but paid his foolish idle court to false Duessa. At length he heard loud bel-
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 lowing through the wood, a fearful sound, and ere he could don his armor or seize his shield, a monstrous enemy came stalking in his sight, a hideous giant, horrible and so high, he seemed to threat the very skies. Beneath his feet the ground did groan for dread and in his hand he bore as weapon a shaggy oak, torn by its root, from out the earth. Or-go'gli-o was the giant's name. His mother was the earth, his father Ae'o-lus, that blustering God of Wind, and all puffed up with blustering boastfulness he seemed.

When he espied the Knight he gan advance with dreadful fury and huge force, who, hopeless, hapless, sought to array himself to battle; yet all disarmed and eke so faint he was, he scarce could stand. The Giant's stroke fell merciless and had the Knight not leapt aside, he had been surely slain, but though he was not stricken of the blow, yet did the very wind it raised have power to overthrow the Knight and hurl him senseless to the ground. There he did lie at mercy of the giant, but false Duessa begged Orgoglio that he spare his enemy's life, make him his slave, and take her for his dame. Orgoglio, thereunto agreeing, took up the senseless Knight, bore him to his castle and cast him into

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his deepest dungeon. Duessa, he took, even as she begged, to be his dame. He gave her gold and purple to wear and for to make her more dreaded of men, he gave her as steed to ride upon a monstrous beast with seven great heads, its scales of iron and brass and its foul tail so long that it could reach the very stars, cast those sacred things to earth and trample them beneath its feet.

The woful dwarf when thus he saw his master fall, took up his arms, his silver shield and spear, and fled away. He had not travelled far when he did come at last on Una, fleeing from the lawless Sansloy's clutch. Much it rued the dwarf to tell his mistress all the tale of what had chanced to her dear knight, and much it rued fair Una to hear, yet still she was resolved never to stay from going forward and, alive or dead, to find her knight.

*High over hills and low adown the dale,
She wandered many a wood and measured many a vale.*

At last she chanced to meet a goodly knight marching by the way, together with his squire. His glittering armor shone from far and across his breast he wore a baldric shining with precious stones. His sword was buckled with a golden thong, its sheath of ivory curiously carved, its hilt of burnished gold, its handle bright with mother-of-pearl. His golden helmet was surmounted by a dragon with golden wings and over all waved high a bunch of vari-colored hairs, sprinkled with pearls and gold. His warlike shield was closely covered from sight, and might never be seen of mortal eyes, for it was made of diamond, dazzling, pure, and clean, and eke so hard that no spear point could ever pierce it. No magic arts against that shield had any power, but all that was not truly as it seemed to sight, faded and fell before it.

Whenas this knight, by name Prince Arthur, drew near to Una, he greeted her full courteously, but from her answers loath, he saw some secret sorrow troubled her. Thus with kind words and gentle he won her to tell him all her woful tale, and



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hearing how her knight lay languishing in a dungeon in power of that huge giant, Orgoglio, he bade her be of cheer, and vowed he would not forsake her in her need until he had acquitted her captive knight. Thus they two fared forth together with the dwarf, their guide, and so they came unto Orgoglio's castle. There the noble Knight alighted from his steed and bade the lady stay to see what fortune should befall him in the fight. So with his squire he marched forward to the castle wall. But the gates they found fast shut and no warder there to guard the same, nor was there any answer to their calls. Then the squire took up a little horn that hung at his side by a rope of twisted gold with gayest tassels. It was a wondrous horn—for three miles round its blast was heard, and no enchantments or deceits could stand before it. No gate was so strong, no lock so firm and fast, but that before that piercing noise it flew wide open. Before the Giant's gate Prince Arthur's squire now blew that horn. All the castle quaked upon the ground and every door sprang open. The Giant himself, dallying with Duessa in a flowery bower, was sore dismayed, and came rushing forth, Duessa following, high mounted on her beast, whose every head did flame with fiery tongue.

When the Knight beheld Orgoglio approach, he flew fiercely toward him. Orgoglio, lifting up his dreadful club all armed with ragged snubs and knots, thought to have slain him with a single blow. But wary Arthur leapt aside, so that the mighty mace, missing its mark, embedded itself within the earth, and while the giant bending, struggled to free the encumbered club, Prince Arthur with his shining blade, clove off his left arm, so that the Giant roared and bellowed with rage and pain. Then came Duessa rushing with her beast to the defence of Orgoglio. Ramping and threatening, all his heads like flaming brands, he came, but Arthur's squire did meet him with his single sword, and like a bulwark stood, fending that beast from off his lord. Then false Duessa, full of wrath, took from a golden cup which she still bore

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for working magic arts, a secret poison that she sprinkled on the squire, so that his strength and courage fled and he fell helpless to the ground. When the good Knight saw his beloved squire fallen at mercy of that cruel beast, he left Orgoglio and turned to save the squire. With his stout blade he smote one of the monster's heads and clove it to the teeth. Thereat the creature ramped and scourged the empty air with his long tail, and would have cast his rider from his back, had not the Giant come to succor her. With all the force of his two arms now joined in one, he raised his club and smote Prince Arthur on the shield, so that he hurled him to the ground. Yet in his fall the veil that covered his blazing shield was rent asunder and lo! such dazzling brightness smote the Giant's eyes, he let his arm fall down that he had raised to slay the Knight, and likewise that foul beast was blinded by the light and tumbled to the earth to yield him conquered. In answer to Duessa's screams, Orgoglio sought once more to raise his mace. It was in vain. In the flashing beams of that bright shield he had no power to strike nor to defend. And so Prince Arthur slew him. But when the breath was gone from out that blustering, boastful Giant, his huge great body shrunk and shrivelled up and vanished quite and of that monstrous mass was nothing left, save like an empty bladder.

When false Duessa saw her champion fall, she sought to flee away, but that light-footed squire gave chase and brought her back as prisoner to his lord. The lovely Una, having seen all this from far, came hurrying up to greet the victor. Then Prince Arthur entered without delay into the castle. None but a doting old porter, most ignorant and infirm, stood there to bar his passage; and so he passed him by and made his way through all the length and breadth of that rich castle. Nowhere did he find the Red Cross Knight until he came at last unto a fast locked door, wherein there was a little grate. Through this, he called to know if there was any living wight within. Therewith a hollow,

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dreary voice made answer with a piteous plaint. Then, filled with pity and with horror, the champion rent asunder the iron door with furious force. He entered in, but found no floor beneath his feet. Instead, he dimly saw a deep descent as dark as hell, from whence a baneful smell breathed forth. But neither darkness, filthy bands, nor noisome smells could withhold Arthur from his purpose pure. With constant zeal and boldest courage, he found the means to lift the prisoner up, although the thighs of that good Red Cross Knight had grown so feeble from long durance in that hole, that he could little help himself. His sad, dull eyes, deep sunk in hollow pits, could scarce endure the light. His cheeks were thin and bare, his arms rawboned, that once had been so strong. Yet when his lady saw him once again, whom she had sought so long, despite his dolorous look, she flew to him with hasty joy and cried: "Welcome, my lord, in weal or woe!" Then Arthur showed him where his foe lay dead and that false dame stood conquered, who had been the root of all his woes.

"Now is it in your power," quoth he, "to let her live or die."

"It were a shame," quoth Una, "to avenge ourselves on one so weak. Slay her not, but despoil her of her robe and let her fly."

So they stripped the witch of all her royal robes and ornaments and jewels and when she stood despoiled of all this outward show, their eyes beheld her truly as she was, a loathly, wrinkled hag, ill-favored, fearsome, old, her gums all toothless and her head quite bald. She had a fox's tail and monstrous feet, one like an eagle's claw, one like a bear.

*"Such then," said Una, "as she seemeth here,
Such is the face of falsehood; such the sight
Of foul Duessa, when her borrowed light
Is laid away, and counterfeiting known."*

Thus unmasked, and knowing all men saw her as she was, the false witch fled to the wilderness to hide her shame in rocks

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and caves. But Una and the two knights abode for a space within the castle to rest themselves. Then those two knights swore true friendship to one another, and parted to go their several ways.

Una and her knight set forth once more to rescue Una's parents from the dragon. Yet soon adown the long, white road they saw come galloping toward them fast, a knight, disheveled, pale, his hair on end for horror. About his neck he wore a hempen rope and seemed to flee as if in terror of some fearsome thing. Scarce could the Red Cross Knight prevail on him to stay and tell his tale. He fled, he said, from an old man who had met him and a friend of his returning from a quest whereon they had not met success, and that old man had spoken first with honey words, but later subtly, cunningly. He argued that they two were good for naught, could never be happy, nor honorable, nor good, could never achieve aught great or useful in the world and so might better die. Ere they knew it, the wily words of that old man had filled their souls with such despair, that one of these poor knights had seized a knife and slain himself, while he, who fled with staring eyes, had even had the rope about his neck to hang himself, when from the evil enchantment of those words he broke away and fled.

When the Red Cross Knight heard this, he cried that he would meet this sorcerer that gave out poison of despair. Ere long they came upon a dark and doleful cave beneath a craggy cliff, whereon there sat a ghastly owl. All about stood sticks and stumps of trees without a single leaf, whereon many a man had hanged himself for sheer despair. Within the cave they found a cursed man in rags, sitting upon the ground full sadly musing. His long gray locks hung all disordered over his rounded shoulders and hid his face, but through that



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wild entanglement, his eyes shown deadly dull. Beside him lay the knight who had slain himself with a knife for hearkening to the old man's words. The Red Cross Knight rushed forward full of zeal to do that old man punishment for such a deed, but, or ever he laid his hand upon him, the old man began to speak. With evil charmed words he brought before the Knight all the evils of this mortal life, fear, sickness, death, old age, loss, labor, sorrow, strife, pain, hunger, cold, till one had thought his deed was good to lead the knight now dead to take a way out of such miseries. Subtly, too, he began to mind the Red Cross Knight of all the sins that he himself had done, how he had deserted his faithful dame for a false witch, and lived in pride and sloth, all barren of deeds of good, and to suggest that he who had wandered so far from righteousness could never find the Way of Right again, nor ever dare to hope for aught but everlasting wrath from God. So might he better die, far better die. Ere he knew it, those poisoned words of despair took full possession of the Knight's bewildered mind. He saw himself hopeless altogether and worthy of naught but everlasting punishment by righteous sentence of the Almighty's law. So when that hideous old man made offer to him of a dagger, he seized it from him and lifted his hand to plunge it in his breast. But Una, clear-eyed and undeceived, snatched from his hand the dagger. "Fie, fie, faint-hearted Knight!" she cried. "Is this the way thou doest battle with the dragon, and savest my imprisoned parents? Let not vain words and devilish thought dismay thy constant spirit! Why shouldst thou despair, who can most confidently expect a share in heavenly mercies? Though God be just, yet eke with Him is grace to save men from their wickedness. Arise, Sir Knight! Arise and leave this cursed place."

So up he rose and straightway mounted on his steed and rode away, leaving that old man so enraged by his escape, he took a rope and hanged himself. But, alas! Many a man that boasts of mighty prowess and strength of arms, and many victories in battle

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fields, all so soon as he doth come to fight against spiritual foes, doth yield and like a coward fly. So this Red Cross Knight, who stood against the fiercest outward foes, but lamely fought despair within his heart, and Una, perceiving this, how weak in body and soul he was, led him to an ancient house not far away, that there he might recover, through companionship and aid of those pure men and women who dwelt therein. The home was governed by wisdom of a matron named Dame Celia, whose only joy was doing deeds of good, and she had three most lovely daughters, Fi-del'i-a, Sper-an'za, and Cha-ris'sa.

Arrived at her door, Una and her knight found it fast locked, but they had no sooner knocked than it was opened and with all due gentleness and humility a porter bade them enter. Low they had to bend their heads to pass, for straight and narrow was the way which he did show, but when they had once entered through the narrow gate, they saw a broad and spacious court, plain and yet pleasant to be walked in. A squire of rare courtesy, yet simple and sincere withal, led them to the lady of the place. She had been at her prayers, but rose and greeted Una joyously, for well she knew the true and faithful maid. Then in her modest guise she bade the Red Cross Knight warm welcome, and entertained them both with all sweet courtesies, so that nought was wanting to show her bounteous and wise.

Thus as they began to talk together, lo! two most goodly virgins came into the hall, linked arm in arm in lovely wise, and walking with even steps at equal pace. Their countenances were demure and full of modest grace. The eldest of these, Fidelia, was arrayed all in lily white, and her face like crystal shone with sunny beams, while all about her head gleamed rays of light. In her right hand she bore a golden cup filled to the brim with water and wine, and in her left hand she held a book both signed and sealed with blood. Her younger sister, Speranza, was clad in blue, and on her arm a silver anchor lay, whereon she leaned, and her

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Hardly up to his great height could the Red Cross Knight have climbed, had not that Dame of Mercy upborne his steps and helped him on.

*There they do find that goodly aged sire,
With snowy locks adown his shoulders shed;
As hoary frost with spangles doth attire
The mossy branches of an oak half dead.*

Little that old man cared for meat and drink, whose mind was full of spiritual repast, and when first the Knight and dame interrupted his meditations, he was scarce willing to lay his heavenly thoughts aside, but learning from the dame how they had clomb that tedious height that he might show this knight the way to heaven, which he alone could do, he made promise to reveal that wondrous path that never leads the travellers astray, but brings them after their long labor joyous rest and endless bliss.

“First for a season, fast and pray,” he said, “to purify thy spirit.”

And when the Knight had fasted well and prayed, the old man led him to the highest pinnacle of his high mount of meditation.

*From thence, far off, he unto him did show
A little path that was both steep and long,
Which to a goodly city led his view,
Whose walls and towers were builded high and strong,
Of pearl and precious stone, that earthly tongue
Cannot describe, nor wit of man can tell;
Too high a ditty for my simple song,
The City of the Great King, hight it well
Wherein eternal peace and happiness doth dwell.*

New Jerusalem, the old man called the city's name, which God hath built for those to dwell in that are purged of sin. Which, when he saw how beautiful it was and full of light and joy, the Knight cried out, “O let me not again turn back unto the world, whose joys are all so fruitless. Let me go straight unto that city and rest there forever in peace!”

The old man shook his head, and thus addressed the Knight.

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“Not yet may that be. First thou must do thy work on earth. Here canst thou but have the vision of the place. Go—slay the dragon, set the maiden’s parents free, and lo! men shall call thee for thy deed a Saint, St. George. When thou hast steadfastly performed all thy labors upon earth, then and not until then, doth that city there await thee. Go!”

Dazzled by the light of all that heavenly glory, the Red Cross Knight could see the earthly things but dark and dim below. Yet did he find his way back to the faithful Una. And now, well purged of sin, his heart rejoicing, full of faith and hope, of charity and mercy, and in his thoughts high visions of that life of joy to win, that life that man can never see but from the highest mount of contemplation, he bade farewell to Celia and her daughters and with Una fared forth upon his way once more.

Eftsoons they came upon the brazen tower where that old king and queen were held in durance by the dragon, and all at once they heard a hideous roaring sound and on the sunny side of a great hill they saw the monster. When the dreadful beast espied the gleam of armor, half flying and half footing, he drew near, his largeness casting much wide shadow under his huge wings. He reared his monstrous body swollen with wrath and armed with brazen scales. His long tail, wound in hundred folds, overspread his back and at its point it bore two deadly stings. His cruel jaws were sharp, exceeding steel, his horrible wide gaping jaws had three rows of iron teeth, and from his gorge came issuing a cloud of smothering smoke. His blazing eyes, like two bright shining shields, burned with wrath and sparkled living fire. The Knight couched his spear and made at him fiercely, but no lance could pierce that brazen hide. The beast turned swift about and with his tail swept horse and rider to the ground. Both lightly rose again and the Knight rained such good blows upon those brazen scales, that though no stroke could pierce, they so enraged the beast, he mounted in the air and stooping low, snatched

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up both horse and rider in his talons. Yet that strong knight so struggled in his grasp, he was constrained at last to drop him to the ground, where, laying three men's strength unto the stroke, the Knight then struck a blow that glanced his scaly neck but made a piercing wound beneath his wing. As raging seas are wont to roar beneath the wintry storms, so roared the monster. Flames of fire he threw forth from his nostrils. Blow after blow the good Knight dealt him, but those flames of fire piercing the good Knight's armor, singed his flesh, and in such heat, faint and full weary, worn out with toil and wounds, he could not hold his own, but was by that foul dragon's tail hurled deep into a well that lay behind his back.

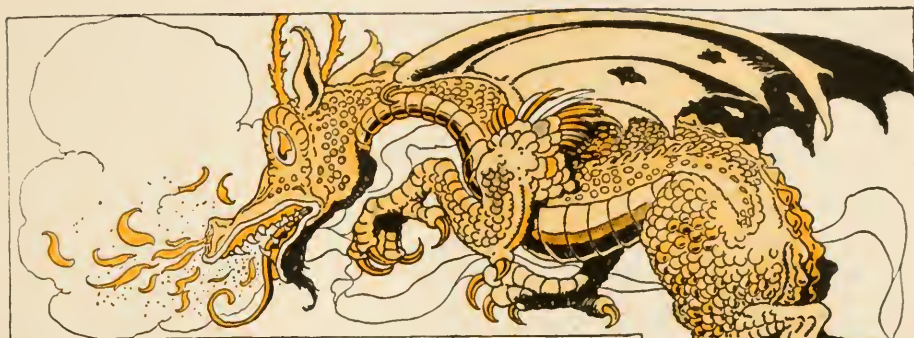
Then, truly the dragon deemed the victory won, and with expanded breast and mighty clapping of his iron wings, proclaimed himself the victor. Yet all night long the faithful Una watched and prayed, and when the morning came, behold! the Red Cross Knight sprang from that well with strength renewed, for that was none other than the well of life with wondrous virtue to recover health and strength.

Amazed at sight of him, his foe, whom he had thought quite vanquished, the dragon stood in doubt. The Knight then dealt his crest so sore a blow it cleft the skull. Loud yelling, the beast

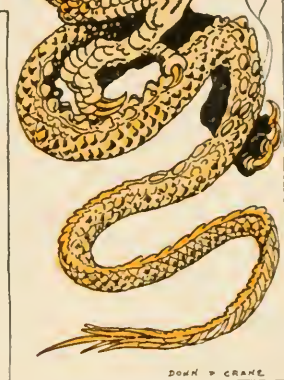
towered up and bore the Knight to earth, then with his sting he pierced his shield and struck his shoulder, where that vile sting stuck fast, nor could be got thereout. The good Knight raised his blade and cleft the monster's tail in twain, leaving but the stump in his shoulder. Breathing then furious flames, the dragon seized the good Knight's shield in his fierce claws nor could his grasp



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be loosened, till the Knight rained on him such a storm of blows, that he loosed one claw to defend himself, when the Knight, smiting with might and main, clean hewed off the other claw. Then such a storm of fire the beast sent forth, he made the Knight retire, and wearied with the fray, the good Knight lost his footing in the mire and fell again. Thus as before the dragon left the fray deeming himself the victor. And thus as before the gentle Una spent the night in prayer.



But the Knight had fallen now beside a tree whence flowed a trickling stream of balm that gave him life and strength as had the well of life and when the morning came, once more he rose and addressed him to the battle. When a second time the dragon saw him appear whom he thought dead, he waxed dismayed. Yet still he advanced with wonted rage, opening wide his jaws to swallow him at once. Adown that gaping mouth the good Knight plunged his sword and pierced his throat, and then at last, the dragon fell. Like some huge cliff whose false foundations have been washed away by waves, he fell. He fell down dead and all the earth did groan for shock of his great fall.

Then Una came, praised God, and thanked her faithful Knight for his great victory. And from the walls of that old

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land used their high office but as a cloak for their corruptions. He who had naught was everywhere ground down beneath the heel of him who had; Justice went limping, blind, and halt, throughout the land, and the King himself in far-off London-town, though he had many a merry tilt with barons and clergy too on this very matter, never came off from the wordy frays with the prize of even so much as a single statute to protect the sturdy yeomen of good old England in their sovereign rights. Thus Justice, beaten out as with cudgels from courts and churches and castles, must e'en go and dwell in the stout hearts of Robin Hood and his bold men of Sherwood Forest, brave yeomen all, each driven from the haunts of men by some villainy that befell them in the name of the law of the land.

There in the greenwood they lived a merry life and a free, and righted many a shortcoming in the workings of the lopsided tribunals of Nottinghamshire by maintaining in due and orderly fashion the superior law of the forest, which, being put into words was this—rich or poor, fair play for all; and honor to no velvet coat, but honor to him to whom honor is due, who hath a stout heart, a true, and a merry, a keen eye, and a strong right arm. Full many a fat and lazy bishop or high-born lord, puffed up with riches wrung from the poor, was forced to stop and pay unwilling toll to that merry band, and his ill-gotten gains were doled out again to all who had need in the countryside. Thus the name of Robin Hood was to those who waxed fat on the fruits of other men's labors a name of terror, but in every humble and honest home throughout the whole North Country a word of household blessing.

Now it chanced at this time that there dwelt in Nottingham the most inveterate, most obdurate, most stubborn enemy of Robin and his men, the right worshipful, right powerful, right proud and haughty Lord High Sheriff of Nottingham. Many a time had good Robin put a spoke in the Sheriff's wheel when he or his